

Stories

- [Out of homelessness, into a hovel: Public money spent on Seattle houses with bugs, trash, no water](#) In this watchdog story, reporter Vernal Coleman spent months poring through thousands of pages of public records and conducted dozens of interviews with tenants, landlords and public officials to uncover how public money was being spent to house homeless people in rundown homes infested with bed bugs, mold, electrical problems and other hazards – a program done with little government oversight. After the story appeared, the state agency responsible for overseeing one of the public subsidy programs highlighted in the story launched an effort to improve on-sight inspections.
- [This tiny house village allows drugs. Should it have been put in a high drug-traffic area?](#) One of several watchdog stories Project Homeless has done, this story looked at an experimental tiny house village that allowed residents to use drugs on site, and how that impacted the neighborhood around it. It also revealed the failure of the non-profit that ran the village to move people into permanent housing. After the story ran, the [city decided to close the camp](#).
- [Native Americans, Seattle's original residents, are homeless at highest rate](#) People of color – especially Native Americans – are vastly overrepresented in King County's homeless population. This story, by Vianna Davila, examined Seattle's strategy to reduce the number of homeless Native people, and the challenges to achieve that goal. It was the first in [a series of stories](#) highlighting the issue, which led to Seattle's only Native city council member questioning if [annual one-night-counts of homelessness accurately capture the Native population](#).
- [Tiny-home villages are a key part of Seattle's homeless strategy. Are they working?](#) Seattle was the first city in the U.S. to sanction homeless camps on public land, and its full embrace of tiny house villages has been modeled across the country. But the struggles of one village to move people onto permanent housing underscores the difficulty of managing this model. In response to the story, Seattle significantly increased funding for case managers, and has switched to other nonprofits for its new tiny house villages.
- [Seattle still doesn't know what to do with thousands of people living in vehicles](#) More homeless people sleep in vehicles than tents in Seattle and King County, but Seattle has no coherent strategy to deal with thousands of RVs and cars parked on its streets and doubling as homes. The story, part of a series which included [the story of](#)

[a young woman who died in an RV](#), was cited by city leaders as it committed to more aggressively address the issue.

- [San Diego did what Seattle didn't: give people a safe place to sleep in cars.](#)

As part of Project Homeless' solutions-journalism emphasis, reporter Vianna Davila examined other cities' strategies for moving people out of vehicles and out of homelessness. Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan cited the story from the podium at a news conference as an example of how the city needs to hear solutions from elsewhere. In the next round of budgeting, Seattle earmarked \$250,000 to open a safe parking lot modeled on San Diego.

- [San Francisco is cracking down on tent camps. Will Seattle do the same?](#)

Reporter Vianna Davila looked at San Francisco's crackdown on tent camps, and what lessons it might offer Seattle. The story helped shape the public narrative about Seattle's more lenient approach, and has been cited by candidates for upcoming Seattle City Council elections who seek to follow San Francisco's model.

- [Vancouver, B.C., bet on modular housing to ease homelessness. Could it work in Seattle?](#)

For this story, reporter Vernal Coleman travelled across the border to look at how Vancouver was spending millions of dollars on inexpensive, modular housing to tackle the city's growing homelessness problem. After the story, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee's proposed budget for 2019-2020 included \$35 million to fund modular housing in the state Housing Trust Fund.

- [Three years into a state of emergency, what we've learned about homelessness](#)
- As Project Homeless commemorated its one year anniversary, the team took a look back at lessons learned over the past year, and over the past three years since Seattle and King County had declared homelessness an emergency. The team also posed potential solutions and looked ahead to issues the city should anticipate tackling in the year ahead.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, DIGITAL MEDIA AND DATA VISUALIZATIONS

Bringing the community into the conversation about homelessness has been a major component of Project Homeless' work. Below is a list of some of the team's public engagement efforts, including community events and soliciting personal essays from people who have experienced homelessness. The team also used Hearken, a digital engagement tool, to solicit readers' questions and allow readers to rank which were most important to them. The result is

the ongoing Ask Project Homeless series. The Seattle Times has used data visualizations to simply explain complex systems, and short documentaries and photo galleries to bring stories to life.

DATA VISUALIZATIONS:

- [How much do Seattle and King County spend on homelessness?](#) Because homelessness services are scattered across federal, count and city governments, there was no single accounting of spending on the problem until Project Homeless tallied it up. The graphic by Seattle Times artist Emily Eng showed the source of \$195 million in spending, and what it was being spent on. This graphic has been widely used by other officials and service providers and prompted Seattle to change its methodology for accounting of homelessness spending.
- [Is Seattle's homeless crisis the worst in the country?](#) Using data visualizations, Project Homeless sliced and diced data from annual point-in-time counts of homelessness around the country to show how the Seattle region compares – poorly – with other cities.

LIVE EVENTS:

- [Livewire: Experts in Seattle offer analysis on how best to support homeless children, families](#) A sold-out audience at Seattle's downtown public library heard a panel of experts explain and offer solutions to student homelessness, which has risen 34 percent in the past five years.
- [Watch: 9 intimate stories of homelessness, told live at Ignite Project Homeless](#) Project Homeless put on a live event with a packed audience at Seattle University where speakers told personal stories of what homelessness looks like to them. Project Homeless staff solicited the stories from readers, and spent 12 hours coaching speakers – many of them first-time public speakers – to tell their own stories.

VIDEO and PHOTO STORIES:

- [I used to live on the street. Now I try to help people who still do](#) A core element of Project Homeless is to give homeless people a platform to tell their own stories. This essay, by a Native American woman who left the streets to become a street outreach worker to homeless people, is one of several personal essays Project Homeless solicited and published.

The Seattle Times

- [A death in the RV 'safe zone'](#) Parents from Spokane come to claim the body of their daughter, Sabrina Tate, after she died in Seattle's lone 'safe zone' parking lot for people sleeping in RVs. The video accompanied [Vianna Davila's story](#) on the failure of Seattle's approach to the dramatically rising problem of vehicular homelessness. Sabrina Tate's death was memorialized in December with a bronze leaf inlaid in a Seattle sidewalk.
- [A Navajo woman finds peace in art, tradition and family](#)

PHOTO STORY:

- ['We'll be safe': How one family found a home with help from Seattle's Popsicle Place](#) Photographer Erika Schultz tells the story, in video and photos, of a specialized family homeless shelter that has been a literal life-saver for Nycolle Benham and her three young children.

ENGAGEMENT:

- [Ask Project Homeless](#) Using the digital engagement tool Hearken, Project Homeless has engaged readers with a series of deeply reported Q&A columns. Readers helped select the questions we answered with online voting, and Project Homeless brought readers into the reporting process to ensure that their question was answered. Ask Project Homeless has consistently had the highest engagement of our content. Among the questions answered: Why aren't police enforcing city laws against tent camping? How many homeless people in Seattle are from here? What can Seattle learn from other cities where homelessness has dropped?